

# Browsing the Web: Touring A Unified Italy

by John F. Dunn

*Despite my Irish last name, I was raised on my mother's Italian side. I would still like to get to Italy, but as that hope fades, this edition of "Browsing the Web" was especially exciting for me. (In fact, as I explored it I realized that to fully experience Italy, two weeks would not be enough, and I would actually have to move, so for now, pulling this article together will do just fine.)*

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The inspiration for this "Browsing" edition was the recent release of two souvenir sheets to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the Unification of Italy (lower right sheet), as well as the 150th Anniversary of the Proclamation of the Kingdom Italy (upper left sheet, "Proclamazione del Regno D'Italia").



For a brief summary of the history of that period, we turn to a great site:

<http://www.antichistati.com/1024/master/masteren.htm>, which tells us:

"The creation of the Kingdom of Italy was the result of

concerted efforts of Italian nationalists and monarchists loyal to the House of Savoy to establish a united kingdom encompassing the entire Italian Peninsula.



*Giuseppe Garibaldi. The stamp is Sc. 118, from a 1910 set of two for the 50th Anniversary of the plebiscite of the southern Italian provinces.*

After the Revolutions of 1848, the apparent leader of the Italian unification movement was Italian revolutionary Giuseppe Garibaldi. He was popular amongst southern Italians.... Garibaldi led the Italian republican drive for unification in south-

ern Italy, but the northern Italian monarchy of the House of Savoy in the Kingdom of Sardinia, a de facto Piedmontese state, whose government was led by Camillo Benso, conte di Cavour, also had ambitions of establishing a united Italian state. Though the kingdom had no physical connection to Rome (deemed the natural capital of Italy, but still capital of the Papal States), the kingdom had successfully challenged Austria in the Second Italian War of Independence, liberating Lombardy-Venetia from Austrian rule. The kingdom also had established important alliances which helped it improve the possibility of Italian unification, such as Britain and the Second French Empire in the Crimean War. Sardinia was dependent on France being willing to protect it and in 1860, Sardinia was forced to cede territory to France to maintain relations....



*Maximum card for the 2010 first day of issue for the Italy single picturing Camillo Benso.*

...Despite their differences, Cavour agreed to include Garibaldi's Southern Italy allowing it to join the union with Piedmont-Sardinia in 1860. Subsequently the Parliament declared the creation of the Kingdom of Italy on February 18, 1861 (officially proclaiming it on March 17, 1861) composed of both Northern Italy and Southern Italy. King Victor Emmanuel II of Piedmont-Sardinia from the House of Savoy was then declared King of Italy. This title had been out of use since the abdication of Napoleon I of France on April 6, 1814....



Sc. 31 1863 40c, King Victor Emanuel II

...In 1866 Otto von Bismarck, Minister President of Prussia offered Victor Emmanuel II an alliance with the Kingdom of Prussia in the Austro-Prussian War. In exchange Prussia would allow Italy to annex Austrian-controlled Venice....The one major obstacle to Italian unity remained Rome.

In 1870, Prussia went to war with France starting the Franco-Prussian War. To keep the large Prussian Army at bay, France abandoned its positions in Rome—which protected the remnants of the Papal States and Pius IX...Italy benefited...by being able to take over the Papal States from French authority....Italian unification was completed, and shortly afterward Italy's capital was moved to Rome....

Following the capture of Rome in 1870 from French forces of Napoleon III, Papal troops, and Papal Zouaves, relations between Italy and the Vatican remained sour for the next sixty years with the Popes declaring themselves to be prisoners in the Vatican.... It would not be until 1929, that positive relations would be restored between the Kingdom of Italy and the Vatican after the signing of the Lateran Pacts.

This map shows the geography of Italy and the chronology of the unification period.

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Collectors with a familiarity of Italian postal history will recognize that most of the states mentioned in the historical summary issued their own stamps prior to joining together in a unified Italian Kingdom. With that in mind we will begin our tour of the Italian States, traveling from the north to the south, down the boot of Italy and ending in Sicily.

### Lombardy-Venetia

Lombardy-Venetia did have its own stamps before unification, but they were from the period under Austrian rule.

These stamps were not issued to give special recognition to the Italian-speaking parts of the Austrian empire. They were issued because Lombardy and Venetia used a currency differing from the rest of Austria. The stamps were identical to the issues



for the rest of the empire issued simultaneously, except for the currency designations, and were first put on sale June 1, 1850.

After most of Lombardy was ceded to Sardinia, Lombardy-Venetia stamps continued in use in Venetia and the remaining parts of Lombardy until these areas were incorporated into Italy in 1866.

The capital of Lombardy is Milan, “the fashion capital of Italy” and one of the fashion capitals of the world. One of its many great architectural attractions is the Duomo di Milano.



*Maximum card for Romania Sc. 2658, for the Italia 1976 International Philatelic Exhibition, pictures the Duomo di Milano.*



tourists can get a close up look at the sculptures that otherwise would go unnoticed.



As we leave Lombardy, we do so with the memory of this

Construction began on the cathedral in 1386 and proceeded slowly. In 1805, Napoleon Bonaparte, about to be crowned King of Italy, ordered the facade to be finished, which was achieved in 1812.

Shown below, one of the primary features of the Duomo di Milano is its roof, which is open to the public so that

artist's rendition of the town of Bergamo, which needs no further explanation.



### **Venetia**

Venice, of course, is best known for its canals. Shown below is a scene on the



Grand Canal, with the Santa Maria della Salute (St Mary of Health), also



shown on a maximum card for the May 8 release of France's



1971 Europa issue, Sc. 1303.

Less well known is the Venetian Arsenal (left), but it relates directly to

Venice's seafaring history. At:

[http://www.almyta.com/Inventory\\_Management\\_History\\_3.asp](http://www.almyta.com/Inventory_Management_History_3.asp)  
we are told, "It is hard to decide on the most amazing plant in the history of manufacturing, but one contender is

*This 2004 stamp, Sc. 2631, marked the 900th anniversary of the Venice Arsenal, with a diagram of the Arsenal.*

certainly the Venetian Arsenal, the shipbuilding, munitions-making industrial powerhouse that allowed the tiny city-state of Venice to be a world power for 600 years.



“Although the site had been used to maintain ships since perhaps the 8th century, it was in 1320 that the Arsenal became Venice’s premier shipbuilding facility. This was a time when most of Europe had no manufacturing more efficient than the guild system...The Arsenal was something different, a harbinger of future times.

“...By the 16th century the Arsenal was the most powerful and efficient ships and munitions manufacturer in the world. It was capable of producing one fully equipped merchant or military vessel per day, whereas production of similar sized and featured ships elsewhere in Europe took months....The Arsenal employed 16,000 people.

“...The records of Christendom’s wars against the Turks are full of references to the power and influence of Venice...Despite its geographical diminutiveness, Venice’s naval power enabled it to control the strategic islands of Crete and Cyprus in Ottoman coastal waters.”

### **Sardinia**

In the northwest corner of Italy—west of Lombardy—we find Sardinia, one of the stamp issuing Italian States. But Sardinia also includes the island of that name.

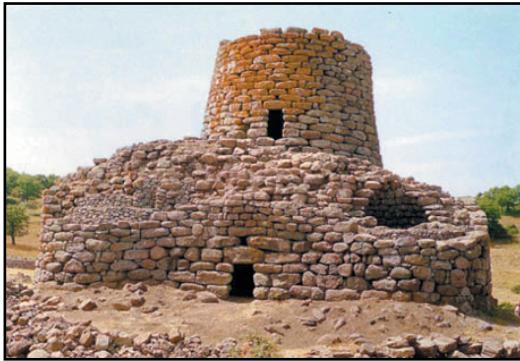
The Sardinia that is our primary subject of study is that in the north, which was the most influential of the Italian States. It was the first independent Italian State to issue stamps, in 1851, preceded only by the Austrian-controlled Lombardy-Venetia. As the Kingdom of Sardinia and then the Kingdom of Italy, at various times leading up to Unification, its stamps were used in other areas.

This first issue of Sardinia a profile view of King Victor Emmanuel II, but because his portrait is embossed, it is difficult to see. So we show here instead, the 1951 Cen-

ennial issue, with Sardinia 1851 Sc. 1-3 on Italy 1951 Sc. 587-589.



Although not as significant in its postal history, the island of Sardinia has much to offer in our tour of Italy. The second largest island in the Mediterranean Sea, it is home to the Nuraghe, one of which is shown here. From Wikipedia we learn, "The nuraghe is



the main type of ancient megalithic edifice found in Sardinia, Italy. Today it has come to be the symbol of Sardinia and its distinctive culture, the Nuragic civilization....

"The typical nuraghe is situated in a panoramic spot and has the shape of a truncated conical tower resembling a beehive. The structure has no foundations and stands only by virtue of the weight of its stones, which may weigh as much as several tons. Some nuraghes are more than 20 metres in height.

"Today, there are more than 8,000 nuraghes still extant in Sardinia, although it has been estimated that they once numbered more than 30,000....The nuraghes were built between the middle of the Bronze Age (18th-15th centuries BC) and the Late Bronze Age. Many were in continuous use from their erection until Rome entered Sardinia in the 2nd century BC...

“The use of the nuraghes has not been determined: they could have been religious temples, ordinary dwellings, rulers' residences, military strongholds, meeting halls, or a combination of the former. Some of the nuraghes are, however, located in strategic locations—such as hills—from which important passages could be easily controlled.

“Nuraghes could have been the ‘national’ symbol of the Nuragic peoples. Small-scale models of nuraghe have often been excavated at religious sites....”

We conclude this first leg of our tour of Italy and the Italian States with a relaxing stop at Spargi Beach on the island of Sardinia.



For a detailed description of the Arrubiu nuraghe and its excavation, go to:  
<http://www.comuneorroli.it/sito/inglese/arrubiuing.htm>

Shown at left is a cover and cancel commemorating the “Inauguration of the Arrubiu Nuraghe, one of the largest and most complex of these structures. The stamp has no relationship to the subject.

The stamp, Italy Sc. 562, shows a Sardinian shepherd with a Nuraghe in the background.

